

## May is the month of Mary

“The month of May is, a month which the piety of the faithful has long dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God! We are delighted and consoled by this pious custom associated with the month of May, which pays honour to the Blessed Virgin and brings such rich benefits to the Christian people. Since Mary is rightly to be regarded as the way by which we are led to Christ, the person who encounters Mary cannot help but encounter Christ likewise. For what other reason do we continually turn to Mary except to seek the Christ in her arms, to seek our Saviour in her, through her, and with her?” (Encyclical *Mense Maio* (On the Month of May) of Pope Paul VI 29th April 1965)

During this month of May, Catholics - in Church and in the privacy of the home - are asked to offer Mary, the Queen of Heaven, a fervent and loving homage of prayer and veneration. The devotion to Mary during this particular month arose at around the end of the thirteenth century. It was reasonably established by the sixteenth century and through the efforts, in particular, of the Society of Jesus the practice became widespread throughout the Church. The custom of a “Marian month” at this time of year has been supported and encouraged by successive popes.

### Why honour Mary?

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church. She therefore serves as the guide and inspiration for the baptised who seek to live as servants of God. Holy Scripture reminds us how Mary “conceived without sin” valiantly co-operated with the will of God and how central her earthly life was to the saving mission of her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Mary’s life was characterised by unstinting faith and so she remains the supreme example for the faithful who are called to live in obedience to God.

The month of May largely coincides with the Church’s celebration of the Easter season. Hence, it is proper that our observance of the month should accentuate Our Lady’s participation in the Paschal mystery and in Pentecost.

### WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN HONOUR OUR LADY

#### Regina Caeli (Queen of Heaven)

This is an antiphon addressed to Mary for the Resurrection of her Son. It is said in place of the Angelus during Eastertide (i.e. from Easter Sunday to Pentecost). The text is produced below:

V. Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.  
 R. For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.  
 V. Has risen, as He said, alleluia.  
 R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.  
 V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.  
 R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### The Holy Rosary

This is also known as the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is one of the best known prayers to the Mother of God. It is a biblically inspired prayer that invites us to contemplate the salvific events of Christ’s life and their close association with the Virgin Mother. It is highly commendable that in the month of May parishioners, on their own or gathered together in family or groups, should recite the appropriate Mysteries of the Rosary each day.

[Click here to view a guide to the saying of the Rosary.](#) It includes the new Mysteries of Light (Luminous Mysteries) proposed by the late Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter on the Most Holy Rosary *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*.

#### Litany of Loreto

This consists of a long series of invocations to Our Lady. They follow a set rhythm that creates a powerful prayer of praise and supplication. [Click here to view the full text.](#)

#### May Altar

It is a worthy endeavour for families in the parish to construct an Altar in their homes in honour of Our Lady during May. This can consist of a white cloth upon which should stand a statue of the Virgin Mary together with some flowers. This centrepiece in the house serves as a reminder of the month’s significance and encourages us to consecrate ourselves to Jesus through Mary.

